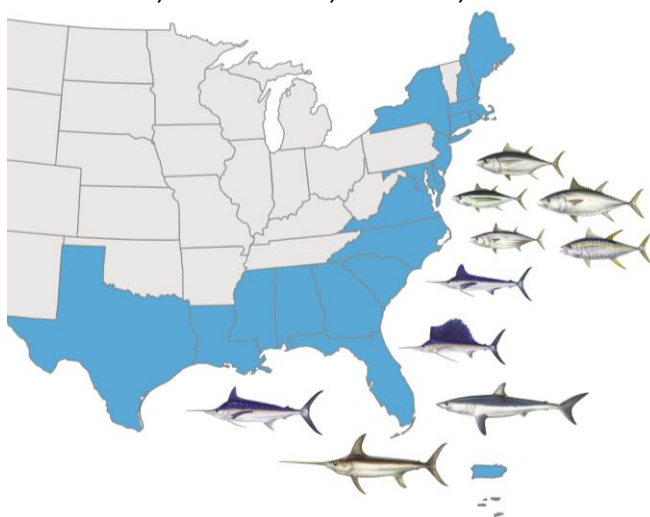


HMS Compliance Guide: Recreational Fishing

for Atlantic
Billfishes, Swordfish, Sharks, and Tunas



Published January 2021

Office of Sustainable Fisheries
Atlantic Highly Migratory Species
Management Division

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species>



Introduction to Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Management

This guide is intended to provide a plain language summary of how to comply with Federal regulations for Atlantic HMS (tunas, swordfish, sharks, and billfishes). Atlantic HMS within the U.S. Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean, are managed by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) under the authority of the Secretary of Commerce.

HMS fisheries are managed under the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic HMS Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and its amendments. NOAA Fisheries recently updated and amended several of the implementing regulations for the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP. Regulatory changes include, *but are not limited to*, the following sections:

- VI. All HMS recreational permit holders are only allowed to retain male shortfin mako sharks that measure at least 71 inches fork length (FL) (180 cm FL) and female shortfin mako sharks that measure at least 83 inches FL (210 cm FL).**
- VI. Recreational permit holders, who also hold a shark limited access permit, are allowed to land shortfin mako sharks under the recreational size limits, retention limits, and gear restrictions. Such shortfin mako sharks cannot be sold and no sharks may be sold that were caught by a vessel with an HMS Angling permit.**
- VI. In addition to the shark endorsement requirement, all HMS permitted vessels will be required to use non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks when fishing for sharks recreationally, except when fishing with flies or artificial lures. Any shark caught on a hook other than a non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hook must be released unless caught using flies or artificial lures.**
- VII. Bigeye and/or yellowfin tuna carcasses that have been damaged (i.e., bitten) by a shark or another marine species, may be retained and landed if the remainder of the fish meets the minimum size of 27 inches (69 cm). No tissue may be cut away from or other alterations made to the damaged areas of the fish. These provisions do not apply to bluefin tuna.**

Fishery rules change frequently. Check <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/atlantic-hms-fishery-compliance-guides> to be sure you have the most recent version of this guide. It is **your responsibility** to be familiar with the latest regulatory updates and to comply with the current official regulations.

To stay up-to-date with HMS regulations, sign up for **Atlantic HMS News** at https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USNOAAFISHERIES/subscriber/new?topic_id=USNOAAFISHERIES_18

All Atlantic HMS that are caught but not kept must be released immediately to improve their chances of survival without removing them from the water.¹ Fishing techniques and gear modifications are summarized in the careful handling and release brochure:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/outreach-and-education/careful-catch-and-release-brochure>

Endnotes (¹, ², ³, etc.) are in the final chapter of this guide and refer to the locations of the regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) (Title 50, Wildlife and Fisheries).

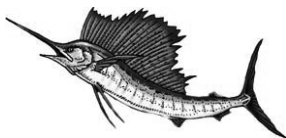


TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	PERMITS and ENDORSEMENTS	4
II.	GEARS	5
III.	CLOSED AREAS.....	6
IV.	BILLFISHES	9
V.	SWORDFISH.....	12
VI.	SHARKS.....	15
VII.	TUNAS	20
VIII.	CHARTER/HEADBOATS	24
IX.	TOURNAMENTS	28
X.	NATIONAL SALTWATER ANGLER REGISTRY	29
XI.	CONTACTS.....	31
XII.	Citations in the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations.....	35

This guide replaces and supersedes all previous guides and complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act. For a comprehensive list of updated Atlantic HMS regulations, please refer to the electronic Code of Federal Regulations (<https://go.usa.gov/xUkDH>).

If there is a discrepancy between this document and the regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations, the regulations take precedence.

I. PERMITS and ENDORSEMENTS ²

To fish recreationally in federal waters for any authorized Atlantic tunas, swordfish, billfishes, and sharks, and within the waters of Atlantic coastal states for tunas (excluding Maine, Connecticut, and Mississippi),³ vessel owners must have a valid federal fishing permit for their vessel. The type of permit depends on the fish species, fishing gear, and fishing trip. The four types (or categories) of permits that can be used to recreationally fish for Atlantic HMS are HMS Angling, HMS Charter/Headboat, Atlantic Tunas General category, and Swordfish General Commercial permit. Each permit is issued to a vessel owner for a specific vessel. All passengers onboard a vessel with a valid HMS permit may recreationally fish for Atlantic HMS under specified terms and conditions. Please refer to each species section for specific species and gear restrictions. To fish for sharks recreationally, permit holders need to apply for and receive a shark endorsement on their permit.⁴ This requirement was implemented in Amendment 5b in 2017. Additionally, vessels issued a Charter/Headboat permit need a commercial endorsement to sell HMS.⁵ Vessels without the endorsement will be considered "recreational" and those with the endorsement will be considered "commercial" and will need to follow U.S. Coast Guard regulations for commercial vessels.

Buy or Renew an HMS Open-Access Permit:

<https://hmspermits.noaa.gov>

(888) 872-8862

HMS Angling

Strictly for recreational fishing (i.e., no sale). A shark endorsement is required on the permit to fish for sharks.⁶

HMS Charter/Headboat

Required for vessels taking for-hire passengers recreational fishing for Atlantic HMS. A commercial sale endorsement is required to sell any HMS.⁷ A shark endorsement is required on the permit to fish recreationally for sharks. See Section VIII for detailed information.

Atlantic Tunas General category

Commercial fishing permit for Atlantic tunas that can also be used for fishing recreationally for all HMS **only** when participating in a registered HMS tournament.⁸ A shark endorsement on the permit is required to fish recreationally for sharks during registered HMS tournaments. See Section IX for more information.

Swordfish General Commercial

Commercial fishing permit for Atlantic swordfish that can also be used for fishing recreationally for all HMS **only** when participating in a registered HMS tournament under certain restrictions.⁹ A shark

endorsement on the permit is required to fish recreationally for sharks during registered HMS tournaments. See Sections V and IX for more information.

Only one of these four permits can be issued to a vessel in a calendar year, except the allowable combination of an Atlantic Tunas General category permit and a Swordfish General Commercial permit. Permit holders may only change permit category within 45 days of the permit issuance date, as long as no fish were landed in that time period.¹⁰

Where do the Federal regulations apply?¹¹

Federal recreational fishing regulations apply in federal waters and on the high seas, and may apply to recreational fishing in state waters. Anglers possessing a federal HMS fishing permit who are fishing in state waters must follow federal regulations for HMS in those waters, unless the state regulations are more restrictive, in which case the state regulations apply. Anglers who are planning on fishing in state waters should be familiar with the state regulations for specific species and situations. A list of state agency contacts is in Section XI.

II. GEARS¹²

Each HMS permit allows the use of certain fishing gears, depending on: 1) the type of permit and 2) the fish species. Please see each species section for fishing gear rules. The following gears are authorized for recreational HMS fishing:

Bandit gear	A vertical hook and line gear with rods attached to the vessel when in use. Manual, electric, or hydraulic reels may be used to retrieve lines.
Rod and reel	A handheld fishing rod with a manually or electronically operated reel attached.
Handline	A mainline with no more than two gangions or hooks attached. Must be retrieved by hand, not by mechanical means, and must be attached to, or in contact with, a vessel.
Speargun	A muscle-powered speargun equipped with a trigger mechanism, a spear with a tip designed to penetrate and retain fish, and terminal gear. Terminal gear may include, but is not limited to, trailing lines, reels, and floats. The term “muscle-powered speargun” means a speargun that stores potential energy provided by the operator’s muscles, and that releases only the amount of energy that the operator has provided to it from his or her own muscles. The operator must be physically in the water when using this gear, and may freedive, use SCUBA, or other underwater breathing devices. ¹³
Greenstick	An actively trolled mainline attached to a vessel and elevated or suspended above the surface of the water with no more than 10 hooks or gangions attached to the mainline. The suspended line, attached gangions and/or hooks, and catch may be retrieved

Secondary gears	<p>collectively by hand or mechanical means. Greenstick does not constitute a pelagic longline or bottom longline.</p> <p>(a.k.a. “cockpit” gears) may be used only at boatside to aid and assist in subduing, or bringing onboard, Atlantic HMS that have first been caught or captured using primary gears authorized for recreational HMS fishing. Examples: dart harpoons, gaffs, and tail ropes. Secondary gears may not be used to capture, or attempt to capture, free-swimming or undersized HMS.¹⁴</p>
------------------------	--

HOOK TYPES

Circle hook	A hook originally designed and manufactured so that the point of the hook turns perpendicularly back toward the shank of the hook to form a generally circular or oval shape.
Offset circle hook	A circle hook originally designed and manufactured so that the barbed end of the hook is displaced relative to the parallel plane of the eyed-end, or shank, of the hook when laid on its side.
J-hook	Although not defined in federal regulations, J-hooks are fishing hooks that are generally shaped like the letter “J” and do not meet the definition of a circle hook.

FISHING TECHNIQUES

Surface trolling¹⁵	A fishing technique where the lines trail behind a vessel which is in constant motion at speeds in excess of four knots with a visible wake. Such trolling may not involve the use of down riggers, wire lines, planers, or similar devices.
Downrigger¹⁶	A piece of equipment attached to a vessel that has a weight on a cable that is attached to hook-and-line gear to maintain lures or bait at depth while trolling. Downriggers may be used with the authorized recreational hook and line gears including bandit, rod and reel, handline, and greenstick gear.

III. CLOSED AREAS

An angler on an Atlantic HMS-permitted vessel may fish recreationally for Atlantic HMS in federal waters, except in areas closed to fishing. A description of these areas is below, followed by a map.

<p>The Tortugas Marine Reserves¹⁷</p> <p>Fishing for any species and anchoring by fishing in vessels is prohibited year-round in the EEZ portions of Tortugas North and Tortugas South.</p>	<p>The Tortugas North area is bounded by 24°40’00” N. lat., 83°06’00” W. long.; 24°46’00” N. lat., 83°06’00” W. long.; 24°46’00” N. lat., 83°00’00” W. long.; thence along the line denoting the seaward limit of Florida’s waters, as shown on the current edition of NOAA chart 11438 to 24°40’00” N. lat., 83°06’00” W. long. Tortugas South is bounded by 24°33’00” N. lat., 83°09’00” W. long.; 24°33’00” N. lat., 83°05’00” W. long.; 24°18’00” N. lat., 83°05’00” W. long.; 24°18’00” N. lat.,</p>
---	---

83°09'00" W. long.; 24°33'00" N. lat., 83°09'00" W. long.

Madison-Swanson and Steamboat Lumps Closed Areas¹⁸

Surface trolling is allowed from May-October, but fishing by any other method is prohibited year-round.

The coordinates for the Madison-Swanson closed area are: 29°17' N. lat., 85°50' W. long.; 29°17' N. lat., 85°38' W. long.; 29°06' N. lat., 85°38' W. long.; 29°06' N. lat., 85°50' W. long. The coordinates for the Steamboat Lumps closed area are: 28°14' N. lat., 84°48' W. long.; 28°14' N. lat., 84°37' W. long.; 28°03' N. lat., 84°37' W. long.; 28°03' N. lat., 84°48' W. long.

Edges 40 Fathom Contour Closed Area¹⁹

This area is closed to all HMS fishing gears from January- April. Open to HMS fishing May-December.

The Edges 40 Fathom Contour closed area is bounded by straight lines connecting the following coordinates: 28°51' N. lat., 85°16' W. long.; to 28°51' N. lat., 85°04' W. long.; to 28°14' N. lat., 84°42' W. long.; to 28°14' N. lat., 84°54' W. long.

Gulf of Mexico Bluefin Tuna²⁰

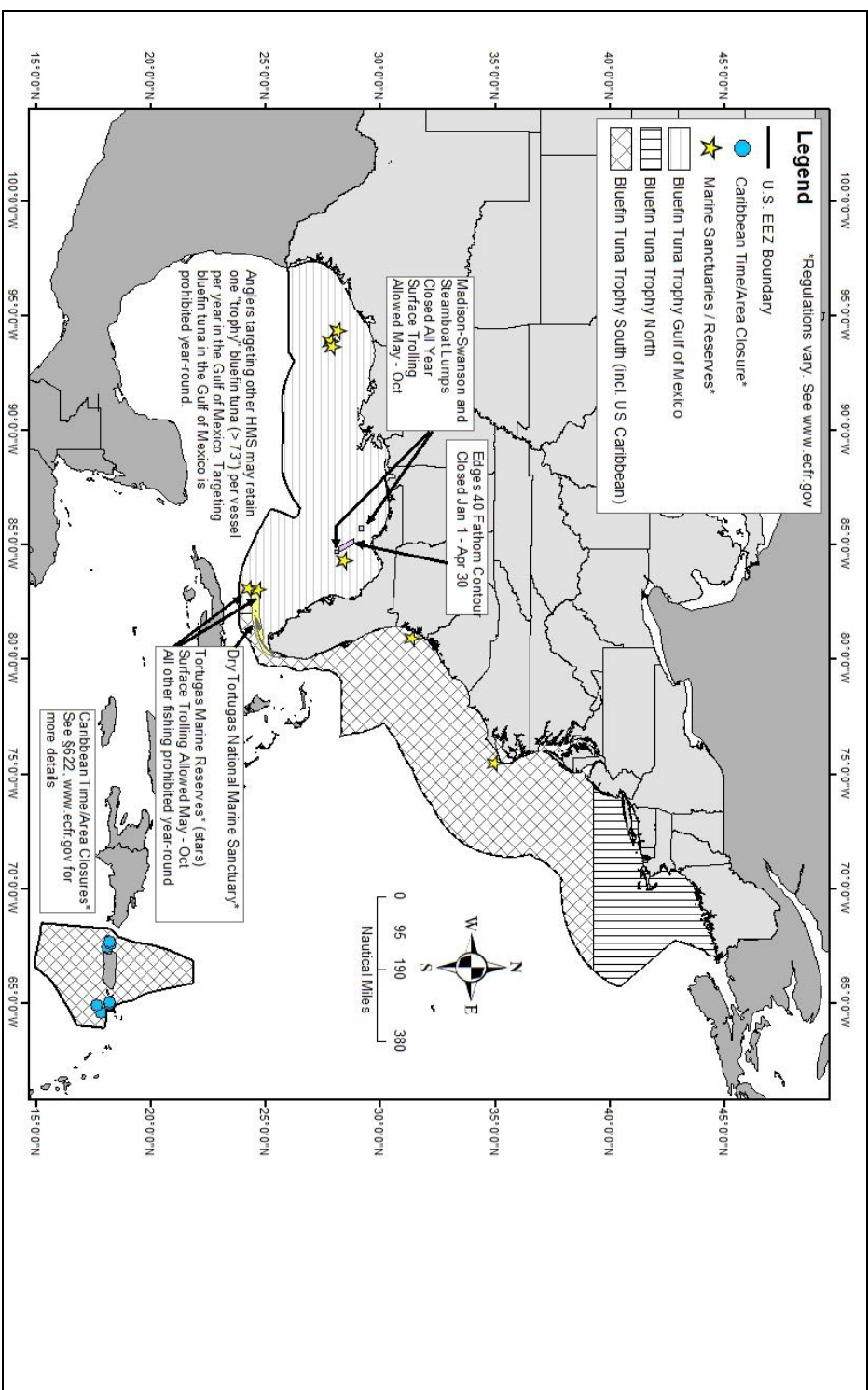
Anglers may not target bluefin tuna at any time in the Gulf of Mexico. This area is bluefin tuna spawning grounds. However, HMS Angling or HMS Charter/Headboat permit holders may retain one "trophy" bluefin tuna (>73") per vessel per year from the Gulf of Mexico, if it is caught incidentally while targeting other species, and provided the "trophy" category subquota in the Gulf of Mexico is available at the time of harvest (see Section VII).²¹

South Atlantic Swordfish (South of 5° N latitude)

Recreational anglers may not fish for or land swordfish south of 5° N. latitude.²²

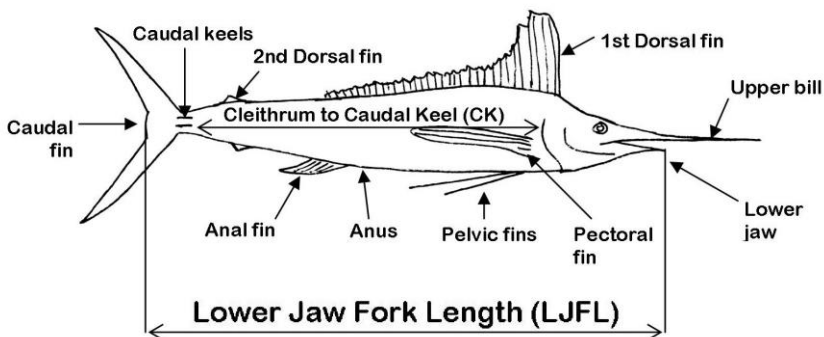
Other Marine Protected Areas

There are a number of marine protected areas (MPAs) throughout U.S. waters that may restrict recreational fishing activities. For more information, please visit <http://marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov/>.



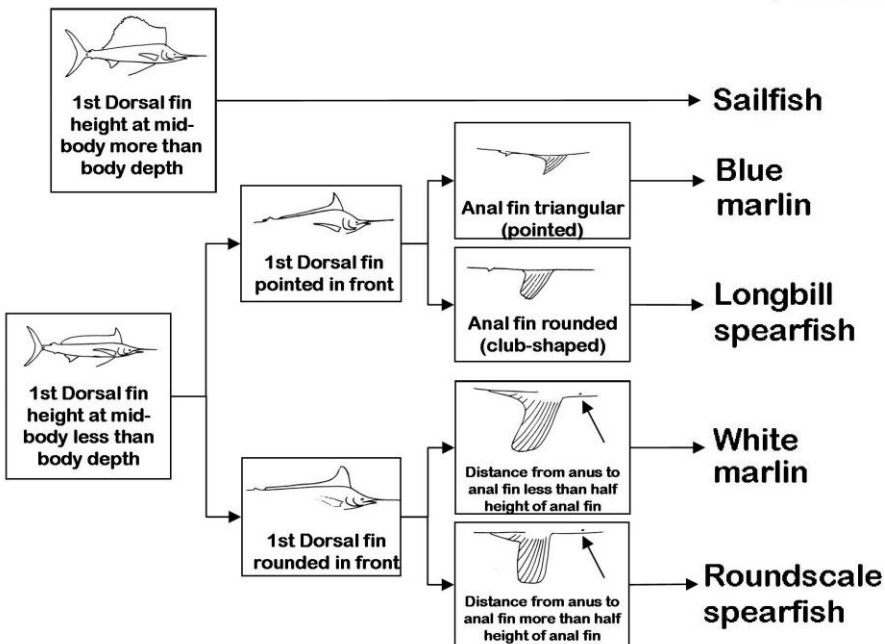
IV. BILLFISHES

ANATOMY AND MEASUREMENT OF ATLANTIC BILLFISHES



LJFL measurement – means the straight-line measurement from the anterior tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the caudal fin.

IDENTIFICATION OF ATLANTIC BILLFISHES



AUTHORIZED SPECIES²³

Blue marlin | White marlin | Roundscale spearfish | Sailfish

PROHIBITED SPECIES²⁴

Longbill spearfish

PERMITS AND GEARS

Permits	Gear ²⁵
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. HMS Angling,²⁶ OR2. HMS Charter/Headboat,²⁷ OR3. Atlantic Tunas General category²⁸, OR Swordfish General Commercial²⁹ ONLY if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament.	Rod and reel

Billfish tournament anglers fishing with natural bait (or natural/artificial bait combination) must use non-offset circle hooks. J-hooks and offset circle hooks may only be used with artificial lures.³⁰

SIZE/BAG LIMITS AND SEASONS

Species	Minimum Size (LJFL) ³¹	Bag Limit	Season
Blue marlin*	99"	No limit**	Jan.1 – Dec. 31
White marlin*	66"	No limit**	Jan.1 – Dec. 31
Roundscale spearfish*	66"	No limit**	Jan.1 – Dec. 31
Sailfish	63"	No limit**	Jan.1 – Dec. 31

* There is an annual U.S. landings limit of 250 Atlantic blue marlin, white marlin, and roundscale spearfish (combined). Landings updates and seasonal closures are posted at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/atlantic-highly-migratory-species-landings-updates>.³²

** Billfish cannot be retained if a hammerhead or oceanic whitetip shark is already on board or has been offloaded from the vessel.

LANDINGS RESTRICTIONS³³

Billfish may be gutted at sea, but must be landed whole with head, fins, and bill intact.

NOAA Fisheries strongly encourages the live release of billfishes.

An Atlantic billfish that is caught but not kept must be released immediately without removing it from the water to improve its chances of survival.³³

Some tips for safe handling and release of billfishes:

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/compliance/guides/cc_brochure_web.pdf

1. Do not remove the fish from the water, even for a picture.
2. Use circle hooks and dehooking devices that hook the fish in the jaw or



corner of the mouth, making it easier to remove the hook and less harmful to the fish.

3. Use heavier tackle to reduce the fight time so the fish isn't exhausted and depleted of energy, which could add stress and contribute to death.

A vessel that has been issued an Atlantic Tunas General category or Swordfish General Commercial permit may use that permit to fish recreationally for Atlantic billfish during a registered Atlantic HMS tournament. HMS Angling category regulations for Atlantic billfish apply, including those addressing authorized gears, techniques, and size limits for billfish caught under either permit.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS³⁴

- Anglers must report all recreational billfish landings.
 - Anglers in Maryland and North Carolina must report at a state-operated reporting station (state contact information is in Section XI).
 - All other anglers must report to NMFS within 24 hours via one of the following methods: online at <https://hmspermits.noaa.gov>, call (800) 894-5528, or use the HMS Catch Reporting App. To obtain the HMS Catch Reporting App, go to hmspermits.noaa.gov, click on "Fish Reporting" or "Mobile app download."
 - If the angler enters (reports) a billfish in a registered HMS tournament, the tournament operator must report that fish. A list of registered tournaments is available at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/atlantic-highly-migratory-species-tournaments>
- The Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP, formerly MRFSS) may survey anglers at the dock, by phone, or by mail.³⁵ If contacted, anglers are required to participate in these surveys; however, participation does not fulfill reporting obligations and vessel owners/operators must still report all billfish as described above.

RESTRICTED AREAS³⁶

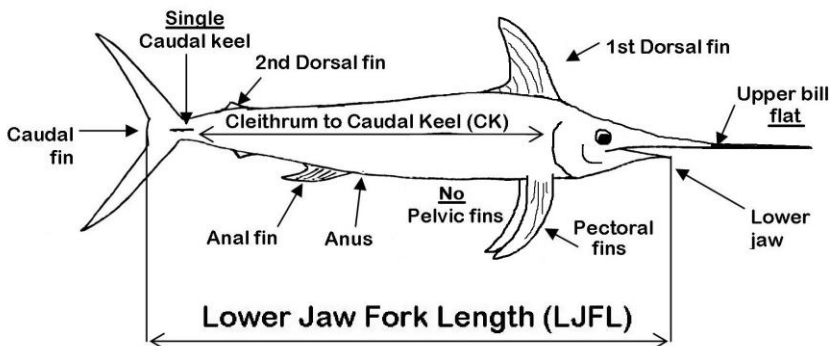
- Tortugas Marine Reserves (closed year-round)
- Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas (closed year-round except for surface trolling allowed May-October)
- Edges 40 Fathom Contour closed area (closed January-April)



V. SWORDFISH

ANATOMY, MEASUREMENT, AND IDENTIFICATION OF SWORDFISH

Differences between swordfish and billfish are underlined>.



LJFL measurement – straight-line measurement used if the head is naturally attached; **CK measurement** – measurement along the curved body contour used if the head is removed/not naturally attached.³⁷ “Naturally attached” means the whole head is still fully attached to the carcass; the bill may be removed up to the tip of the lower jaw³⁸.

AUTHORIZED SPECIES

North Atlantic Swordfish (North of 5° N. lat.)

PERMITS AND GEARS

Permits	Gear ³⁹
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HMS Angling,⁴⁰ OR 2. HMS Charter/Headboat,⁴¹ OR 3. Swordfish General Commercial⁴² OR Atlantic Tunas General⁴³ ONLY if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament. 	Handline and Rod and reel



SIZE/BAG LIMITS AND SEASONS

Permits		Minimum Size ⁴⁴	Bag Limit ⁴⁵	Season
HMS Angling OR Swordfish General Commercial OR Atlantic Tunas General category (in a registered HMS tournament)		47" LJFL or 25" CK	1 per person, up to 4 per vessel per trip	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31
HMS Charter/Headboat*	Charter Vessels		1 per paying passenger, up to 6 per vessel per trip	
	Headboat Vessels		1 per paying passenger, up to 15 per vessel per trip	

LANDING RESTRICTIONS

Swordfish may be headed and gutted, but may not be cut into pieces at sea.⁴⁶

If a swordfish carcass has been bitten by a shark, the remainder of the fish must still meet the minimum LJFL or CK measurement.⁴⁷

A vessel that has been issued a Swordfish General Commercial permit may fish recreationally for swordfish during a registered Atlantic HMS tournament; however, Swordfish General Commercial regulations, including regional retention limits and other requirements apply (see the HMS Commercial Compliance Guide).⁴⁸

A swordfish that is caught but not kept must be released immediately to improve its chances of survival without removing it from the water.⁴⁹

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS⁵⁰

- Anglers must report all recreational swordfish landings.
 - Anglers in Maryland and North Carolina must report at a state-operated reporting station (state contact information is in Section XI).
 - All other anglers must report to NMFS within 24 hours via one of the following methods: online at <https://hmspermits.noaa.gov>, call (800) 894-5528, or use the HMS Catch Reporting App. To obtain the HMS Catch Reporting App, go to hmspermits.noaa.gov, click on "Fish Reporting" or "Mobile app download."
 - If the angler enters (reports) a swordfish in a registered HMS tournament, the tournament operator must report that fish. A list of registered tournaments is available at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/atlantic-highly-migratory-species-tournaments>
- The Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP, formerly MRFSS) may survey anglers at the dock, by phone, or by mail.⁵¹ If contacted, anglers are required to participate in these



surveys; however, participation does not fulfill reporting obligations and vessel owners/operators must still report all swordfish as described above.

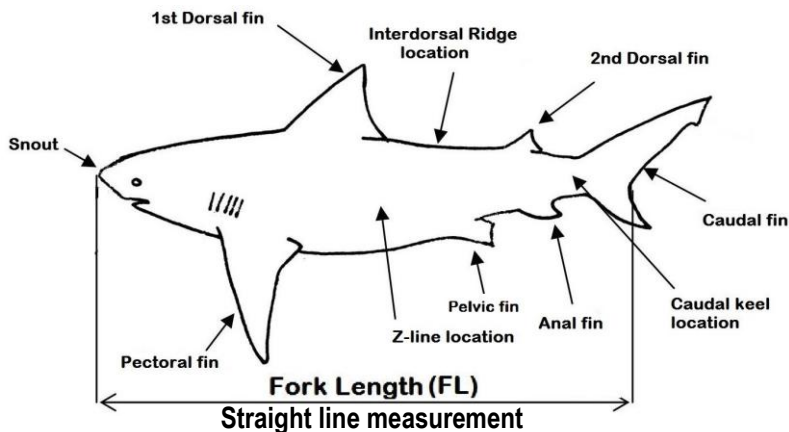
RESTRICTED AREAS⁵²

- Tortugas Marine Reserves (closed year-round)
- Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas (closed year-round except for surface trolling allowed May-October)
- Edges 40 Fathom Contour closed area (closed January-April)
- South of 5° N latitude (closed year-round)⁵³



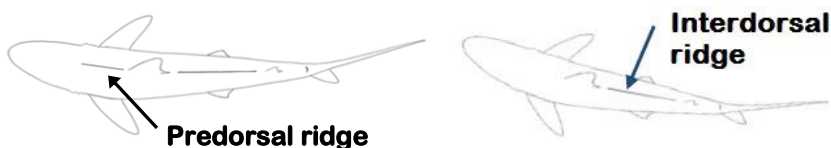
VI. SHARKS

ANATOMY OF A SHARK

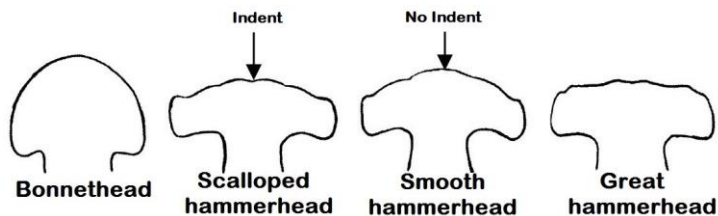


Fork length⁵⁴ - Refers to the **straight line measurement** of a fish from the midpoint of the anterior edge of the fish to the fork of the caudal fin.

IDENTIFICATION OF RIDGEBACK SHARKS



IDENTIFICATION OF HAMMERHEAD SHARKS



Sharks can be difficult to identify, even for experts. To make sure you do not accidentally retain a prohibited species, release any sharks you are not sure you can identify correctly. If the shark has an interdorsal ridge (a ridge of skin on the back between the two dorsal fins), there is a good chance it is a prohibited species and you should release it.

Remember: *If you don't know, let it go.* For help with shark identification, download the Recreational Atlantic HMS Shark ID Placard

(<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/outreach-and-education/shark->



[identification-placard](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/outreach-and-education/prohibited-shark-identification-placard)), the Prohibited Shark ID Placard <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/outreach-and-education/prohibited-shark-identification-placard>) or contact the Atlantic HMS Management Division at 301-427-8503 to request a waterproof hard copy of the placard.

AUTHORIZED SPECIES⁵⁵ (retention allowed)

Large Coastal Sharks (LCS) (non-ridgeback LCS & tiger)		Small Coastal Sharks (SCS)	Pelagic Sharks	Smoothhound Sharks ^{**+}
Blacktip	Lemon	Atlantic	Blue	Smooth dogfish
Bull	Nurse	sharpnose	Oceanic	Florida
Hammerhead, great*	Spinner	Blacknose	whitetip*+	smoothhound
Hammerhead, scalloped*	Tiger+	Bonnethead	Porbeagle***	Gulf smoothhound
Hammerhead, smooth*		Finetooth	Shortfin mako	
			Thresher	

+ Ridgeback sharks that have an interdorsal ridge, or visible line of raised skin, between their dorsal fins.

* Anglers cannot possess these sharks while in possession of tunas, billfish or swordfish.⁵⁶

** Smoothhound sharks are the only authorized species with both a predorsal and an interdorsal ridge.

*** Porbeagle sharks caught alive must be released unharmed if swordfish, tunas, or billfish are retained, possessed, or offloaded from the vessel during that trip.⁵⁷

PROHIBITED SPECIES⁵⁸ (must be released)

Atlantic angel	Caribbean reef+	Night+	Sixgill
Basking	Caribbean sharpnose	Sandbar+	Smalltail
Bigeye sand tiger	Dusky+	Sand tiger	Whale
Bigeye sixgill	Galapagos+	Sevengill	White*
Bigeye thresher	Longfin mako	Silky+	
Bignose+	Narrowtooth		

* A person may fish for white sharks with rod and reel, but must release the fish immediately, with minimal injury, and without removing it from the water.⁵⁹

+ Ridgeback sharks that have an interdorsal ridge, or visible line of raised skin between their dorsal fins.

PERMITS, ENDORSEMENTS, AND GEARS

Permits and Endorsements⁶⁰

To fish recreationally for sharks, a ***shark endorsement*** must be held on one of the following permits:

1. HMS Angling,⁶² **OR**
2. HMS Charter/Headboat,⁶³ **OR**
3. Atlantic Tunas General category⁶⁴ **OR** Swordfish General Commercial⁶⁵ **ONLY** if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament.

Gear⁶¹

Handline and Rod and reel



SIZE/BAG LIMITS AND SEASONS

Permits	Species	Minimum Size ⁶⁶ (FL)	Trip Bag Limit ⁶⁷	Season
HMS Angling, Charter/Headboat, Atlantic Tunas General Category*, or Swordfish General Commercial*	Atlantic sharpnose	None	1 per person	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31
	Bonnethead	None	1 per person	
	Smoothhound Sharks	None	None	
	Hammerheads (Great, Smooth, and Scalloped)	78"	1 per vessel	
	Shortfin mako****	Males at least 71" Females at least 83"		
	All other sharks***	54"		

* Only if participating in a registered HMS tournament.

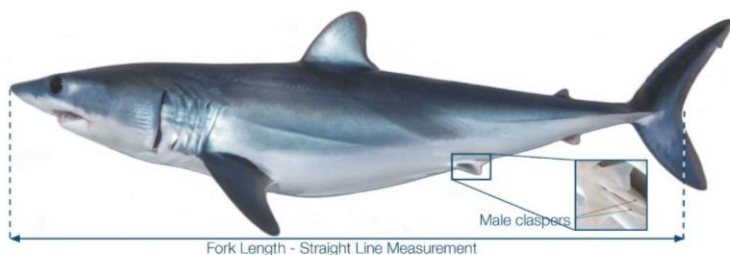
** For example, if there are 3 passengers on a trip, the vessel may retain up to 3 Atlantic sharpnose, 3 bonnethead, and 1 hammerhead or other shark (7 sharks total). Any number of smoothhound sharks may also be retained. If a hammerhead shark is retained, no tunas, billfish, or swordfish may be retained.

*** See above for authorized and prohibited species.

**** See below for shortfin mako minimum size limit requirements.

SHORTFIN MAKO MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT⁶⁸

All HMS recreational permit holders are only allowed to retain male shortfin mako sharks that measure at least 71 inches fork length (FL) (180 cm FL) and female shortfin mako sharks that measure at least 83 inches fork length (FL) (210 cm FL). Male sharks are those sharks that have “claspers,” see Figure below; females sharks do not have claspers.



SHARK ENDORSEMENT⁶⁹

All HMS permit holders that recreationally fish for, retain, possess, or land sharks are required to obtain a shark endorsement on the permit, which requires completing an online shark identification and fishing regulation training course and quiz. Permit holders can take the quiz at any time during the fishing year but the vessel(s) may not leave the dock on a trip that will include fishing for



sharks unless a new or revised permit with a shark endorsement has been issued for the vessel. If requested by the vessel owner, the shark endorsement may be removed from the permit at any time; removal of the shark endorsement means sharks can no longer be fished for, retained, or landed by person(s) aboard that vessel.

All HMS permits, including those with shark endorsements, are vessel-based permits that authorize all individuals fishing on the permitted vessel to fish for, retain, possess, and land species under that permit. Anglers that wish to fish for other HMS (billfish, tuna, swordfish) are not required to obtain a shark endorsement if they do not intend to fish for sharks or harvest the sharks they catch incidentally. HMS permit holders without a shark endorsement that incidentally hook a shark while fishing for other species are required to release the shark immediately without removing it from the water.

CIRCLE HOOK REQUIREMENT FOR SHARKS⁷⁰

As of March 3, 2018, HMS recreational permit holders fishing recreationally for sharks on a vessel with the permits listed above must use non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks except when fishing with flies or artificial lures. Circle hooks are required for any line that is targeting sharks, and this can be determined by the angler on a line-by-line basis. Any shark caught on a hook other than a non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hook must be released unless caught using flies or artificial lures.

LANDING RESTRICTIONS⁷¹

All sharks must be landed intact with the head, tail, and all fins naturally attached. The shark may be gutted and bled at sea (e.g., by making an incision at the base of the tail).⁷² “Naturally attached” means attached to the shark carcass by at least some portion of uncut skin.⁷³

If an Atlantic shark is caught but not kept, it must be released immediately to improve its chances of survival without removing it from the water.⁷⁴

As of March 3, 2018, permit holders who hold an HMS Angling, HMS Charter/Headboat, Atlantic Tunas General category or Swordfish General Commercial permit and also hold a shark limited access permit, are allowed to land shortfin mako sharks under the recreational size limits, retention limits, and gear restrictions. Such shortfin mako sharks cannot be sold and no sharks may be sold that were caught by a vessel with an HMS Angling permit.⁷⁵ A vessel that has been issued an Atlantic Tunas General category or Swordfish General Commercial permit with a shark endorsement may fish recreationally for Atlantic sharks during a registered Atlantic HMS tournament. HMS Angling category regulations for Atlantic sharks apply, including those addressing authorized gears, techniques, bag limits and size limits.

If any of these permit holders also hold a shark limited access permit, they are allowed to land shortfin mako sharks under the recreational size limits, retention limits, and gear restrictions. Such shortfin mako sharks cannot be sold, and no



sharks may be sold that were caught by a vessel with an HMS Angling permit.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS⁷⁶

- The Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP, formerly MRFSS) may survey anglers at the dock, by phone, or by mail.⁷⁷ If contacted, anglers are required to participate in these surveys.
- Anglers in Maryland must report all recreational shark landings, and anglers in North Carolina must report some pelagic shark species, at a state-operated reporting station (state contact information is in Section XI).

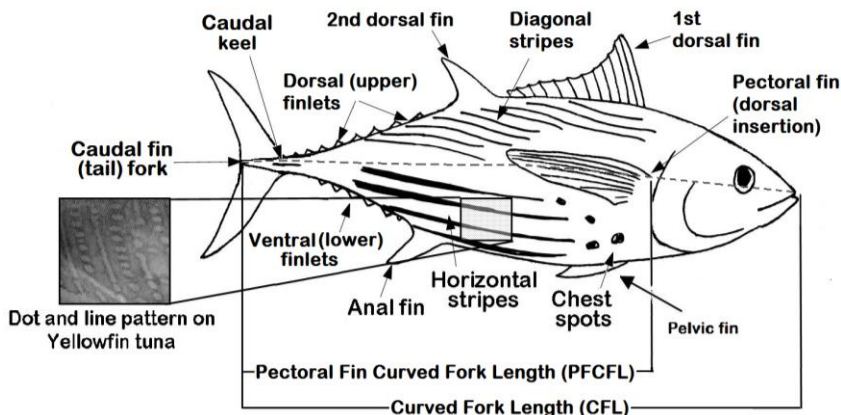
RESTRICTED AREAS⁷⁸

- Tortugas Marine Reserves (closed year-round)
- Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas (closed year-round; except for surface trolling, allowed May-October)
- Edges 40 Fathom Contour closed area (closed January-April)



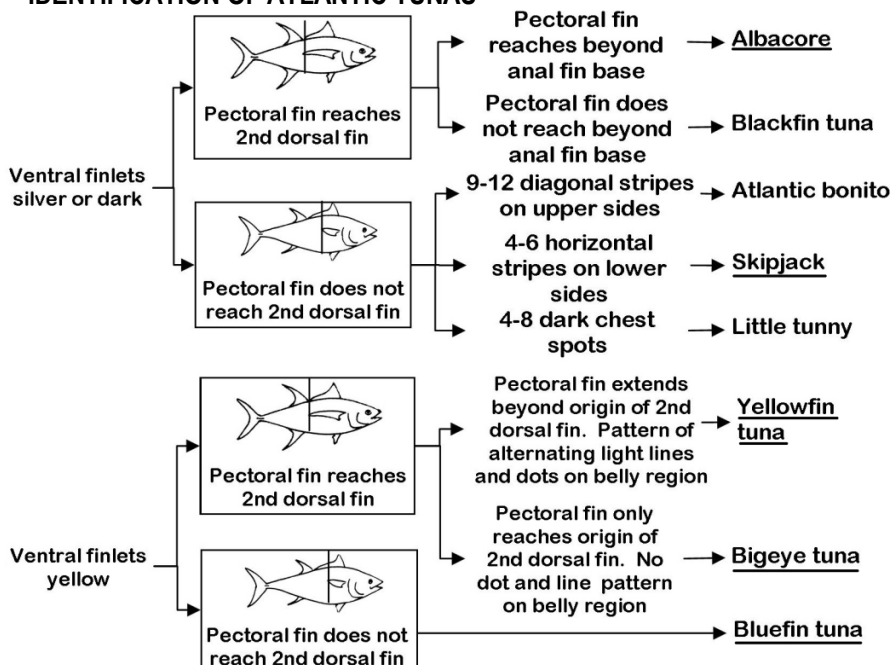
VII. TUNAS

ANATOMY OF ATLANTIC TUNAS



CFL measurement – use if the head is attached.⁷⁹ CFL is measured from the tip of the upper jaw, tracing the contour (i.e., curve) of the body along the dorsal insertion of the pectoral fin and dorsal side of the caudal keel to the fork of the tail.⁸⁰ **PFCFL measurement** – use if head is removed from bluefin tuna. PFCFL is measured from the dorsal insertion of the pectoral fin, tracing the contour of the body along the outer surface of the pectoral fin to the fork of the tail.⁸¹

IDENTIFICATION OF ATLANTIC TUNAS



This guide covers regulations for the tuna species that are underlined.

AUTHORIZED SPECIES

Bigeye, Albacore, Yellowfin, and Skipjack (BAYS) tunas | Bluefin tuna

PERMITS AND GEARS

Species	Gear ⁸²	Permits ⁸³
BAYS and Bluefin tunas	Bandit	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HMS Charter/Headboat OR 2. Atlantic Tunas General category ONLY if participating in registered Atlantic HMS tournament.
	Handline and Rod and reel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HMS Angling, OR 2. HMS Charter/Headboat, OR 3. Atlantic Tunas General category OR Swordfish General Commercial ONLY if participating in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament.
	Greenstick	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HMS Charter/Headboat OR 2. Atlantic Tunas General category ONLY if participating in registered Atlantic HMS tournament.
BAYS tunas only	Speargun*	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HMS Angling OR 2. HMS Charter/Headboat

*Only free-swimming BAYS tunas; not those restricted by fishing lines or other means.⁸⁴

SIZE/BAG LIMITS AND SEASONS

Species	Minimum Size (CFL) ^{85,86}	Bag Limit ⁸⁷	Season
Albacore	None	None	Jan. 1- Dec. 31
Bigeye	27"	None	
Skipjack	None	None	
Yellowfin	27"	3 per person per day. Regardless of the length of a trip, no more than 3 yellowfin tuna per person may be possessed on board a vessel.	
Bluefin	27" to less than 47" <i>School</i>	Bluefin tuna retention limits may change throughout the season. Call (888)-872-8862 or (978)-281-9260 or visit https://hmspermits.noaa.gov for current limits.	Jan. 1- Dec. 31 (or when quota is met)
	47" to less than 73" <i>Large school or Small medium</i>		
	73" or greater <i>Large medium or Giant</i>	1 per vessel per year ("Trophy") see page Error! Bookmark not defined. for trophy regions	

LANDING RESTRICTIONS

All Atlantic tunas may be landed round with fins intact, or eviscerated with the head removed, as long as the fish remains within the specified minimum size (described below) and both the tail and at least one pectoral fin remain attached through landing (all other fins may be removed).⁸⁸ The upper and lower lobes of the tuna tail may be removed for storage purposes as long as the fork of the tail remains intact (see tail trimming).⁸⁹

If a bigeye and/or yellowfin tuna carcass has been damaged (i.e., bitten) by a shark or another marine species, it may be retained and landed but the remainder of the fish must still meet the minimum size of 27 inches (69 cm) CFL. No tissue may be cut away from or other alterations made to the damaged area of the fish.⁹⁰

A vessel that has been issued an Atlantic Tunas General category permit may be used to fish recreationally for Atlantic tunas during a registered Atlantic HMS tournament, applying the General category regulations, including authorized gears, techniques, and size limits (see the HMS Commercial Compliance Guide).⁹¹ Bluefin tuna less than 73" may not be retained aboard Atlantic Tunas General category permitted vessels.⁹²

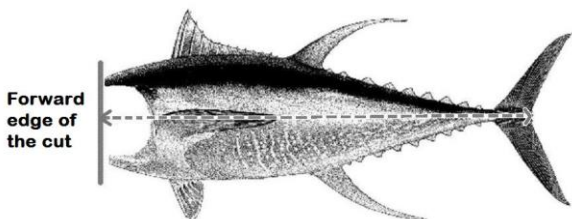
A vessel that has been issued only a Swordfish General Commercial permit may fish recreationally for Atlantic tunas during a registered Atlantic HMS tournament; however, HMS Angling category regulations for Atlantic tunas, including those addressing authorized gears, techniques, and size limits apply.⁹³

Any Atlantic tuna that is caught but not kept must be released immediately to improve its chances of survival without removing it from the water.⁹⁴

Tunas with heads removed

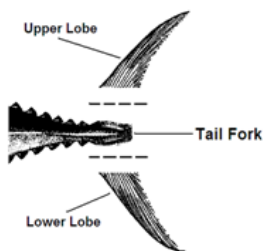
Bluefin tuna must be at least 20 inches (51 cm) pectoral fin curved fork length (PFCFL) if the head is removed.⁹⁵ Multiplying the PFCFL by 1.35 gives the CFL ($20'' \text{ PFCFL} \times 1.35 = 27'' \text{ CFL}$).⁹⁶

Bigeye and yellowfin tuna must be at least 27 inches (69 cm) from the forward edge of the cut to the fork of the tail (see image below) if the head is removed.⁹⁷



Tail trimming

The upper and lower lobes of the tuna tail may be removed for storage purposes as long as the fork of the tail remains intact.⁹⁸



REPORTING REQUIREMENTS⁹⁹

- Vessel owners/operators must report all recreational bluefin tuna landings and dead discards.
 - Vessel owners/operators in Maryland and North Carolina must report at a state-operated reporting station (state contact information is in Section XI).
 - All other vessel owners/operators must report to NMFS within 24 hours by accessing hmspermits.noaa.gov or using the HMS Catch Reporting App. After going to hmspermits.noaa.gov, click on "Fish Reporting" or "Mobile app download." Vessel owners/operators can also report by calling customer service at 888-USA-TUNA (888-872-8862) Monday through Friday 8 am to 5 pm EST.
- The Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) may survey anglers at the dock, by phone, or by mail. If contacted, anglers are required to participate in these surveys.

RESTRICTED AREAS¹⁰⁰

- Targeting bluefin tuna in the Gulf of Mexico is prohibited year-round. HMS Angling or Charter/Headboat permit holders may retain one "trophy" bluefin tuna (greater than 73" CFL) per vessel per year from the Gulf of Mexico if it is caught incidentally while targeting other species, provided the Gulf of Mexico "trophy" category subquota is still available at the time of harvest.¹⁰¹
- Tortugas Marine Reserves (year-round)
- Madison Swanson and Steamboat Lumps closed areas (year-round) (except for surface trolling allowed May-October)
- Edges 40 Fathom Contour closed area (closed January-April)¹⁰²

Updates on **Atlantic tunas**, such as bluefin tuna quota monitoring or retention limits, are posted under "What's New" at <https://hmspermits.noaa.gov>

Atlantic Tunas Information Line at (888) 872-8862
HMS Management Division (Gloucester, MA): (978) 281-9260

VIII. CHARTER/HEADBOATS

Vessels fishing with a HMS Charter/Headboat permit are able to take for-hire passengers recreational fishing for HMS.¹⁰³ These vessels have different requirements than vessels fishing under an HMS Angling, Atlantic Tunas General category, or Swordfish General Commercial permit. The operator of the vessel must also possess a Merchant Marine License or Uninspected Passenger Vessel License.¹⁰⁴ Regulations may vary further among Charter/Headboat permit holders based on the following two vessel types:

Charter: A vessel less than 100 gross tons (90.8 metric tons) that meets the requirements of the U.S. Coast Guard to carry six or fewer passengers on a for-hire trip.

Headboat: A vessel that holds a valid Certificate of Inspection issued by the U.S. Coast Guard to carry passengers on a for-hire trip.¹⁰⁵

A “for-hire” trip is a recreational fishing trip carrying a fee-paying passenger; or a trip having more than three persons for a vessel licensed to carry six or fewer people; or a trip having more persons aboard than the number of crew specified on the vessel’s Certificate of Inspection for a U.S. Coast Guard inspected vessel.¹⁰⁶

COMMERCIAL SALE RESTRICTIONS¹⁰⁷

Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat permit holders that wish sell HMS must obtain a commercial sale endorsement on the permit. When a Charter/Headboat permit has a commercial sale endorsement, there are instances when the catch may be commercially sold; however, this depends on the species and other types of commercial fishing permits that are held. Below is a list of HMS permit combinations, the type of charter/headboat trip, and the species that may be commercially sold in that situation. Atlantic HMS may only be sold by federally-permitted vessels to federally-permitted dealers.¹⁰⁸

Sharks

Silky, oceanic whitetip, and great, smooth, and scalloped hammerhead sharks cannot be possessed or retained on vessels that have both a Charter/Headboat and commercial shark permit (directed or incidental) when tunas, swordfish, or billfishes are onboard, offloaded, or being offloaded from the vessel.¹⁰⁹ Vessels issued an HMS Charter/Headboat permit are required to release unharmed, to the extent practicable, porbeagle sharks that are alive at the time of haulback, if swordfish, tuna, or billfish are retained or possessed on board, or offloaded from, the vessel during the trip.¹¹⁰

HMS Charter/Headboat Permit with Commercial Sale Endorsement AND Shark Directed Limited Access Permit

- For-hire: May sell up to the recreational size and bag limits as long as the commercial fishery is open. When the commercial fishery is closed, may keep, but not sell, up to the recreational size and bag limits.¹¹¹

- Non-for-hire: May sell up to the commercial size (no minimum size) and bag limits (ranges from 0 to 55 non-sandbar LCS per vessel per trip, no limit for SCS and Pelagic sharks, 8 Atlantic blacknose sharks per vessel per trip) as long as the commercial fishery is open. When the commercial fishery is closed, may not keep any sharks from that fishery.¹¹²

HMS Charter/Headboat Permit with Commercial Sale Endorsement AND Shark Incidental Limited Access Permit

- For-hire: May sell up to the recreational size and bag limits as long as the commercial fishery is open. When the commercial fishery is closed, may keep, but not sell, up to the recreational size and bag limits.¹¹³
- Non-for-hire: May sell up to the commercial size (no minimum size) and bag limits (3 non-sandbar LCS per vessel per trip, 16 SCS and Pelagic sharks combined per vessel per trip, 8 Atlantic blacknose sharks per vessel per trip) as long as the commercial fishery is open. When the commercial fishery is closed, may not keep any sharks from that fishery.¹¹⁴

HMS Charter/Headboat Permit with Commercial Sale Endorsement AND Smoothhound Shark Permit

- For-hire: May sell up to the recreational size and bag limits as long as the commercial fishery is open. At this time, there is no recreational size limit or bag limit for smoothhound sharks. When the commercial fishery is closed, may keep, but not sell, up to the recreational size and bag limits.¹¹⁵
- Non-for-hire: May sell up to the commercial size and bag limits as long as the commercial fishery is open. At this time, there is no commercial size or bag limit for smoothhound sharks. When the commercial fishery is closed, may not keep any smoothhound sharks.¹¹⁶

Tunas

HMS Charter/Headboat- with Commercial Sale Endorsement permit only Bigeye, Albacore, Yellowfin, and Skipjack (BAYS)

- For-hire: May sell BAYS tunas up to the recreational size and bag limits.¹¹⁷
- Non-for-hire: There are no limits on the number of BAYS tunas that may be retained and sold, but size limits do apply.¹¹⁸

Bluefin

HMS Charter/Headboat category vessels may fish under either the Angling or Atlantic Tunas General category retention limits. The size class of the first bluefin tuna retained will determine the fishing category of all persons aboard the vessel for a given day. If fish >73" CFL are retained, they may be sold in accordance with the General category seasons and retention limits.^{119,120} HMS Charter/Headboat vessels may not target or sell bluefin tuna while fishing in the Gulf of Mexico.¹²¹

Swordfish

HMS Charter/Headboat with Commercial Sale Endorsement permit only

- For-hire: May **not** sell swordfish. Recreational retention limits apply.¹²²

- Non-for-hire: May sell swordfish as long as the commercial fishery is open.¹²³ Swordfish General Commercial permit regional retention limits apply (see the HMS Commercial Compliance Guide for more information).¹²⁴

HMS Charter/Headboat with Commercial Sale Endorsement AND Swordfish Handgear Limited Access Permit¹²⁵

- For-hire: May **not** sell swordfish. Recreational retention limits apply.¹²⁶
- Non-for-hire: May sell commercial size fish with no bag limit as long as the commercial fishery is open.¹²⁷

HMS Charter/Headboat with Commercial Sale Endorsement AND Swordfish Directed or Incidental LAPs

- In this combination, the Swordfish Directed or Incidental permits are not valid because they must be held in combination with an Atlantic Tunas Longline permit.¹²⁸

Billfishes

Sale of any Atlantic billfish (marlins, spearfishes, or sailfish) is **prohibited**.¹²⁹

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS¹³⁰

Recreational Landings

- **Bluefin tuna**: All HMS Charter/Headboat vessel owners/operators* **must report all recreational landings** (i.e., fish kept) **and dead discards** of Atlantic bluefin tuna to NOAA Fisheries within 24 hours of landing at the dock by accessing hmspermits.noaa.gov or using the HMS Catch Reporting App. After going to hmspermits.noaa.gov, click on "Fish Reporting" or "Mobile app download." Vessel owners/operators can also report bluefin tuna by calling customer service at 888-USA-TUNA (888-872-8862) Monday through Friday 8 am to 5 pm EST.
- **Billfishes and Swordfish**: All HMS Charter/Headboat vessel owners/operators* **must report all recreational landings** (i.e., fish kept) of blue marlin, white marlin, roundscale spearfish, sailfish, and swordfish to NOAA Fisheries within 24 hours of landing at the dock by accessing hmspermits.noaa.gov or using the HMS Catch Reporting App. After going to hmspermits.noaa.gov, click on "Fish Reporting" or "Mobile app download." Vessel owner/operators can also report billfish or swordfish by calling (800) 894-5528.

* In Maryland and North Carolina, HMS Charter/Headboat vessel owners must report their HMS landings (including sharks) at state-operated reporting stations (not via the web or phone number reported above). For additional information on these states' reporting stations, please call (410) 213-1531 (MD) or (800) 338-7804 (NC).

Atlantic HMS Tournament Landings¹³¹

Vessel owners that land and enter billfish or swordfish in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament do not need to report these landings to NOAA Fisheries.

However, if the fish are not reported to the tournament operator, it is the responsibility of the vessel owner to report the fish to NOAA Fisheries.¹³²

NMFS Recreational Surveys

Recreational anglers may be contacted on the dock, by phone, or by mail and asked to participate in the Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) or Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). If contacted, anglers must participate in these surveys to facilitate scientific research and catch monitoring on these species. Participation in the LPS or MRIP does not fulfill reporting obligations and vessel owners/operators must still report all Atlantic bluefin tuna, billfish, and swordfish as instructed above.

Commercial Landings of Swordfish, Sharks, and Tunas

If a vessel owner that has an HMS Charter/Headboat permit also has a permit issued in a fishery that is required to report (e.g., NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region Multispecies logbook (VTR) or NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region Coastal Fisheries logbook), then commercial landings must be reported through that logbook program. If the vessel owner only holds an HMS Charter/Headboat permit, NOAA Fisheries will notify the owner if they are selected to report commercial landings and cost earnings information in a logbook program.¹³³

NOAA FISHERIES OBSERVER PROGRAM

HMS Charter/Headboat vessels are not required to carry a fishery observer on board, but may participate in a voluntary Charter/Headboat observer program.¹³⁴ To participate in the voluntary observer program, call (301) 427-8503.

IX. TOURNAMENTS

An Atlantic HMS tournament is any fishing competition in which participants must register, or otherwise enter, or in which a prize or award is offered for catching or landing HMS.¹³⁵ This includes fishing tournaments where the target species is not an Atlantic HMS, but where participants receive points, prizes, or awards for catching Atlantic HMS. The following regulations pertain to tournaments conducted from ports within any Atlantic or Gulf of Mexico coastal state, as well as the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

REGISTRATION

Tournament operators are required to register their tournament with NOAA Fisheries at least four weeks prior to the start of the tournament.¹³⁶

To register a tournament, go to <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/atlantic-highly-migratory-species-tournaments>.

A public list of registered Atlantic HMS tournaments is also available at the link above. Tournament participants are encouraged to check this list to comply with Atlantic HMS fishing authorizations and reporting requirements.

Please direct questions about tournament registration to (727) 824-5399.

CATCH REPORTING¹³⁷

NOAA Fisheries will notify tournament operators if their tournament is selected for catch reporting. **All billfish tournaments are selected for reporting.** Reports are due within 7 days after fishing has ended.¹³⁸

To report tournament catch, go to <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/recreational-fishermen>.

Please direct questions about tournament reporting to (305) 361-4214.

Participation in other NOAA Fisheries surveys, such as the Large Pelagics Survey or the Marine Recreational Information Program, does not fulfill reporting obligations and tournament operators must still report all catch and landings as instructed on the reporting form.

PARTICIPANTS

To participate in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament, the vessel owner must have one of the following permits:

1. HMS Angling,
2. HMS Charter/Headboat, or
3. Atlantic Tunas General category* permit, or
4. Swordfish General Commercial**.¹³⁹

Permit holders fishing in a tournament that wish to fish for, possess, retain, or land sharks must also have a shark endorsement on their permit.

Make sure an HMS tournament is registered with NOAA Fisheries before

participating. Registered Atlantic HMS tournaments are listed at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/recreational-fishermen>. HMS permit holders do not need to report their recreational North Atlantic swordfish or billfish landings to NOAA Fisheries if the fish are entered in a registered tournament. If billfish or swordfish are landed but not entered in a registered tournament, it is the permit holder's responsibility to report them to NOAA Fisheries (see billfish and swordfish sections for recreational reporting instructions).¹⁴⁰

* Atlantic Tunas General category permit holders may fish recreationally for billfish, swordfish, and sharks **only** if the vessel owner has registered for, has paid an entry fee to, and is fishing under the rules of a registered Atlantic HMS tournament. When fishing in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament, Atlantic Tunas General category permit holders must comply with HMS Angling category regulations for swordfish, sharks, and billfishes, and with General category regulations for Atlantic tunas (i.e., General category permit holders may not fish for or land bluefin tuna < 73" CFL under any circumstances).¹⁴¹

** Swordfish General Commercial permit holders may fish recreationally for billfish, tunas, and sharks **only** if the vessel owner has registered for, has paid an entry fee to, and is fishing under the rules of a registered Atlantic HMS tournament. When fishing in a registered Atlantic HMS tournament, Swordfish General Commercial permit holders must comply with HMS Angling category regulations for tunas, sharks, and billfishes, and with Swordfish General Commercial regulations for swordfish (i.e., swordfish regional retention limits).

GENERAL RESTRICTIONS

All Atlantic HMS recreational fishing regulations (size limits, bag limits, gear restrictions, and possession restrictions) apply to Atlantic HMS tournament participants.¹⁴²

Billfish Tournaments

Anglers fishing from Atlantic HMS permitted vessels and participating in Atlantic billfish tournaments must use only non-offset circle hooks when deploying natural bait or natural bait/artificial lure combinations. A billfish tournament is defined as any fishing tournament that awards points or prizes for billfishes, even if billfishes are not the main species targeted in the tournament. Billfish tournament anglers may deploy "J"-hooks only if they are fishing with artificial lures.¹⁴³ NOAA Fisheries encourages the use of circle hooks by non-tournament anglers to reduce post-release mortality of Atlantic billfishes.

X. NATIONAL SALTWATER ANGLER REGISTRY

If you have a saltwater recreational fishing license or registration from any state or U.S. territory *except* Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands, you are *automatically* registered and do not need to take further action.

For more information about the Angler Registry, please go to <https://www.countmyfish.noaa.gov/register/> or call the toll-free registration line

at 1-888-MRIP411 (1-888-674-7411) from 4:00 am to 12 midnight EST daily.

Following are several points of clarification about the relationship between anglers/vessels with Atlantic HMS permits and the Angler Registry:

- Individuals who fish exclusively on state- or NOAA Fisheries-licensed for-hire vessels (e.g., on a charter or headboat) are exempted from registering because fishing data can be obtained from the vessel operator.
- In the case of HMS Angling permit holders, only the individual permit holder is exempt. Other anglers fishing aboard the vessel will need to register, unless otherwise exempt.
- Individuals who hold a commercial or subsistence fishing license or permit issued by NOAA Fisheries or a state/territory will need to register if they intend to fish recreationally. These individuals do not need to register while fishing pursuant to their commercial or subsistence fishing license or permit.

XI. CONTACTS

NOAA FISHERIES ATLANTIC HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Chief: Randy Blankinship
(301) 427-8503

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/atlantic-highly-migratory-species>

Topics	Office	Contact Information
Commercial swordfish Sharks Exempted fishing permits Atlantic HMS news list Pelagic and bottom longline Protected species Limited Access Permits	HMS Headquarters Office	Phone: (301) 427-8503 Fax: (301) 713-1917 NMFS/SF1 1315 East-West Highway Silver Spring, MD 20910
Atlantic tunas Bluefin tuna dealer reporting Bluefin tuna catch documents Charter/Headboat operations International trade permit	HMS Gloucester Office	Phone: (978) 281-9260 Fax: (978) 281-9340 NMFS/SF1 55 Great Republic Drive Gloucester, MA 01930-2298
Billfishes Swordfish Tournament registration Billfish Certificate of Eligibility Pelagic longline Workshops Limited Access Permits	HMS St. Petersburg Office	Phone: (727) 824-5399 Fax: (727) 824-5398 NMFS HMS 263 13 th Avenue South St. Petersburg, FL 33701
Fishing and Dealer Permits		
Atlantic tunas longline permit Shark and swordfish vessel and dealer permits	NMFS Southeast Regional Permits Office http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/operations_management_information_services/constituency_services_branch/permits/index.html	Phone: (877) 376-4877 263 13 th Ave. South St. Petersburg, FL 33701
Atlantic tunas (General category), HMS Charter/headboat, HMS Angling, and Swordfish General Commercial permits	Automated Permitting System https://hmspermits.noaa.gov/	Phone: (888) 872-8862 Dial "0" to speak with a person.
Atlantic tunas dealer permit Incidental HMS squid trawl permit	NMFS Greater Atlantic Region Permits Office	Phone: (978) 281-9370 Fax: (978) 281-9366 55 Great Republic Drive Gloucester, MA 01930

<https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/permit>
s/

Electronic Dealer Reporting

eDealer

Customer Service:
301-427-8590

NMFS LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICES

FL	Marathon	(305) 743-3110	ME	Ellsworth	(207) 664-0508
	Niceville	(850) 729-8628	NC	Morehead City	(252) 726-0314
	Port Orange	(386) 492-6686	NH	New Castle	(603) 436-3186
	St. Petersburg	(727) 824-5344	NJ	Marmora	(609) 390-8303
	Sunrise	(954) 746-4160		Wall	(732) 280-6490
LA	Slidell	(985) 643-6232	NY	Bellport	(631) 776-1734
MA	East Falmouth	(508) 495-2147	PR	Aguadilla	(787) 508-5403
	Gloucester	(978) 281-9213	SC	N. Charleston	(843) 554-9896
	New Bedford	(508) 992-7711	TX	Galveston	(409) 770-0812
MD	Salisbury	(443) 736-7158		Harlingen	(956) 423-3450
ME	Portland	(207) 780-3241	VA	Newport News	(757) 595-2692

The NMFS Office of Law Enforcement maintains a 24-hour hotline for the public to report potential violations of Atlantic HMS regulations. This number should be used only to report potential violations, not for general information, concerning Atlantic HMS.

24-Hour Law Enforcement Hotline: (800) 853-1964

U.S. COAST GUARD

Commercial vessels are subject to the Fishing Vessel Safety Act of 1988.

Coast Guard Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Program: www.fishsafe.info

Local Coast Guard offices:

Maine to New York	(617) 223-8440
New Jersey to North Carolina	(757) 398-6554
South Carolina to Florida	(305) 415-6868
Gulf of Mexico	(504) 671-2154

COOPERATIVE TAGGING PROGRAMS

For tuna, billfish, or swordfish tagging kits or to report a recovered tag:

(800) 437-3936 E-mail: tagging@noaa.gov

For a shark tagging kit or to report a recovered tag:

Apex Predators Program (401) 782-3320 or (877) 826-2612

NOAA/NMFS/NEFSC

28 Tarzwell Drive

Narragansett, RI 02882-1152, USA

<https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/Narragansett/sharks/>

E-mail: sharkrecap@noaa.gov

MARYLAND AND NORTH CAROLINA RECREATIONAL CATCH CARDS

To report recreational landings of bluefin tuna, swordfish, or billfish in North

Carolina or Maryland:

North Carolina Harvest Tagging Program: (800) 338-7804

Maryland Department of Natural Resources: (410) 213-1531

STATE FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

State	Agency and Website	Phone
Maine	Department of Marine Resources http://www.maine.gov/dmr/	(207) 624-6550
New Hampshire	Fish and Game http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/	(603) 868-1095
Massachusetts	Division of Marine Fisheries https://www.mass.gov/orgs/division-of-marine-fisheries	(617) 626-1520
Rhode Island	Department of Environmental Management http://www.dem.ri.gov/	(401) 789-3094
Connecticut	Department of Environmental Protection http://www.ct.gov/dep/site/default.asp	(860) 424-3000
New York	Department of Environmental Conservation http://www.dec.ny.gov/	(631) 444-0430
New Jersey	Fish and Wildlife http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fqw/	(609) 292-2083
Delaware	Division of Fish and Wildlife http://www.fw.delaware.gov/Pages/FWPortal.aspx	(302) 739-9914
Maryland	Department of Natural Resources http://www.dnr.state.md.us/	(410) 260-8264 (877) 620-8367
Virginia	Marine Resources Commission http://www.mrc.state.va.us/	(757) 247-2200
North Carolina	Division of Marine Fisheries http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/	(252) 808-8013 (800) 682-2632
South Carolina	Department of Natural Resources http://www.dnr.sc.gov/	(843) 953-9312
Georgia	Department of Natural Resources http://www.gadnr.org/	(912) 264-7218
Florida	Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission http://myfwc.com	(850) 487-0554
Alabama	Department of Conservation and Natural Resources http://www.outdooralabama.com/	(251) 861-2882 (251) 968-7576
Louisiana	Department of Wildlife and Fisheries http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/	(225) 765-2800
Mississippi	Department of Marine Resources http://www.dmr.state.ms.us/	(228) 523-4078
Texas	Parks and Wildlife Department http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/	(512) 389-4800 (800) 792-1112
Puerto Rico	Caribbean Fishery Management Council http://www.caribbeanfmc.com/	(787) 766-5927
U.S. Virgin Islands	Caribbean Fishery Management Council http://www.caribbeanfmc.com/	(787) 766-5927

XII. Citations in the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations

The following links are references to the electronic Code of Federal Regulations (eCFR). Each endnote (^{1, 2, 3, etc.}) within this guide directs you to this page. By clicking the links in this section, your internet browser will be directed to the specific location in the eCFR that states the regulations provided in this guide.

Title 50 Wildlife and Fisheries

¹ [635.21\(a\)\(1\)](#)

Permits

² [635.4](#)

³ [635.1\(a\) and \(b\)](#)

⁴ [635.2, 635.4](#)

⁵ [635.2, 635.4\(b\)](#)

⁶ [635.4\(c\)](#)

⁷ [635.4\(b\)](#)

⁸ [635.4\(c\)\(2\) and \(3\)](#)

⁹ [635.4\(c\)\(2\)](#)

¹⁰ [635.4\(j\)\(3\)](#)

¹¹ [635.4\(a\)\(10\)](#)

Gear Types

¹² [635.2](#)

¹³ [635.21\(i\)](#)

¹⁴ [635.19\(a\)](#)

¹⁵ [635.21\(a\)\(3\)\(iii\)](#)

¹⁶ [635.2](#)

Closed Areas

¹⁷ [635.21\(a\)\(3\)\(i\)](#)

¹⁸ [635.21\(a\)\(3\)\(i\)-\(ii\)](#)

¹⁹ [635.21\(a\)\(iv\)](#)

²⁰ [635.23\(b\)&\(c\)\(1\)](#)

²¹ [635.23\(b\)\(1\)&\(2\)](#) – Angling;

[635.23\(c\)\(1\)](#) – CHB;

[635.2](#) - LGmed/Giant BFT

²² [635.27\(c\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#)

Billfishes

²³ [635.2](#)

²⁴ [635.22\(b\)](#)

²⁵ [635.19\(c\)](#)

²⁶ [635.4\(c\)\(1\)](#)

²⁷ [635.4\(b\)\(1\)](#)

²⁸ [635.4\(c\)\(2\)](#)

²⁹ [635.4\(c\)\(2\)](#)

³⁰ [635.21\(f\)](#)

³¹ [635.20\(d\)](#)

³² [635.27\(d\)](#)

³³ [635.21\(a\)\(1\)&\(2\)](#)

³⁴ [635.5\(c\)](#)

³⁵ [635.5\(c\)\(3\)](#)

³⁶ [635.21\(a\)\(3\)](#)

³⁷ [635.20\(f\)\(1\)&\(2\)](#)

³⁸ [635.2](#)

³⁹ [635.19\(e\)](#)

⁴⁰ [635.4\(c\)\(1\)](#)

⁴¹ [635.4\(b\)\(1\)](#)

⁴² [635.4\(c\)\(2\)](#)

⁴³ [635.4\(c\)\(2\)](#)

⁴⁴ [635.20\(f\)](#)

⁴⁵ [635.22\(f\)\(1\), \(2\), \(3\)](#)

⁴⁶ [635.30\(d\)](#)

⁴⁷ [635.20\(f\)\(1\)&\(2\)](#)

⁴⁸ [635.4\(c\)\(2\)&\(4\)](#)

⁴⁹ [635.21\(a\)\(1\)](#)

⁵⁰ [635.5\(c\)](#)

⁵¹ [635.5\(c\)\(3\)](#)

⁵² [635.21\(a\)\(4\)](#)

⁵³ [635.27\(c\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#)

Sharks

⁵⁴ [635.2](#)

⁵⁵ [635.22\(c\)](#)

⁵⁶ [635.22\(a\)\(2\)](#)

⁵⁷ [635.22\(a\)\(3\)](#)

⁵⁸ [635.22\(c\)\(4\)](#) & [635 Appendix A](#)

[Table 1](#)

⁵⁹ [635.26\(c\)](#)

⁶⁰ [635.2, 635.4\(b\), \(c\)](#)

⁶¹ [635.19\(d\)](#)

⁶² [635.4\(c\)\(1\)](#)

⁶³ [635.4\(b\)\(1\)](#)

64 [635.4\(c\)\(2\)](#)
 65 [635.4\(c\)\(2\)](#)
 66 [635.20\(e\)\(2\)&\(3\)&\(4\)&\(5\)](#)
 67 [635.22\(c\)\(1\),\(2\),\(3\)&\(4\)&\(6\)](#)
 68 [635.20\(e\)\(6\)](#)
 69 [635.2, 635.4\(b\),\(c\), 635.4\(j\)\(4\)](#)
 70 [635.21\(f\)\(2\), \(3\), \(k\)](#)
 71 [635.20\(e\)\(1\)](#)
 72 [635.30\(c\)\(4\)](#)
 73 [635.2](#)
 74 [635.21\(a\)\(1\)](#)
 75 [635.22\(c\)\(1\)&\(7\)](#)
 76 [635.5\(c\)\(3\)](#)
 77 [635.5\(c\)\(3\)](#)
 78 [635.21\(a\)\(3\)](#)

Tunas

79 [635.20\(a\)](#)
 80 [635.2](#)
 81 [635.20\(b\)](#)
 82 [635.19\(b\)](#)
 83 [635.4\(b\)\(1\) and \(c\)\(1\), \(2\), \(3\)](#)
 84 [635.21\(i\)](#)
 85 [635.20\(c\)\(1\), \(2\), \(3\)](#)
 86 [635.2](#)
 87 [635.22\(d\), \(e\) and 635.23\(c\)](#)
 88 [635.30\(a\)](#)
 89 [635.30\(a\)](#)
 90 [635.20\(c\)\(3\)](#)
 91 [635.4\(c\)\(3\)](#)
 92 [635.23\(a\)\(1\) and 635.2](#)
 93 [635.4\(c\)\(2\)](#)
 94 [635.21\(a\)\(1\)](#)
 95 [635.20\(c\)\(2\)](#)
 96 [635.20\(b\)](#)
 97 [635.20\(c\)\(3\)](#)
 98 [635.30\(a\)](#)
 99 [635.5\(c\)](#)
 100 [635.21](#)
 101 [635.23\(b\)\(1\)\(i\) 635.27\(a\)\(2\)\(iii\)](#)
 102 [625.28\(a\)](#)
 102 [635.21\(a\)\(4\)](#)

Charter/Headboats

103 [635.4\(b\)](#)
 104 [635.4\(b\)\(2\)](#)
 105 [600.10](#)

106 [635.2](#)
 107 [635.2, 635.4\(b\)\(3\)](#)
 108 [635.31](#)
 109 [635.24\(a\)\(9\)](#)
 110 [635.22\(a\)\(3\)](#)
 111 [635.22\(c\)\(1\)](#)
 112 [635.24\(a\)\(2\)](#)
 113 [635.22\(c\)\(1\)](#)
 114 [635.24\(a\)\(3\)](#)
 115 [635.22\(c\)\(1\)](#)
 116 [635.24\(a\)\(2\)](#)
 117 [635.22\(d\); 635.31\(a\)\(1\) & \(2\);](#)
 118 [635.20\(c\)](#)
 118 [635.20\(c\); 635.31\(a\)\(1\) & \(2\)](#)
 119 [635.23](#)
 120 [635.2](#)
 121 [635.23\(c\)\(1\)](#)
 122 [635.31\(d\) and 635.4\(f\)\(2\); 635.](#)
 123 [22\(f\)](#)
 123 [635.31\(d\) and 635.4\(f\)\(2\).](#)
 124 [635.28\(c\); 635.22\(f\)](#)
 124 [635.24\(b\)\(4\)](#)
 125 [635.4\(f\)\(1\)](#)
 126 [635.31\(d\) and 635.4\(f\)\(2\);](#)
 127 [635.22\(f\)](#)
 127 [635.31\(d\) and 635.4\(f\)\(2\).](#)
 128 [635.28\(c\); 635.22\(f\)](#)
 128 [635.4\(f\)\(1\)&\(4\)](#)
 129 [635.31\(b\)\(1\)](#)
 130 [635.5\(c\)](#)
 131 [635.5\(d\)](#)
 132 [635.5\(c\)](#)
 133 [635.5\(a\)](#)
 134 [635.7\(a\)](#)

Tournaments

135 [635.2](#)
 136 [635.5\(d\)](#)
 137 [635.5\(d\)](#)
 138 [635.5\(d\)](#)
 139 [635.4\(b\)\(1\); 635.4\(c\)\(1\), \(2\), \(3\)](#)
 140 [635.5\(c\)\(2\)](#)
 141 [635.4\(c\)\(2\) and \(3\)](#)
 142 [635.4\(c\)\(2\), \(3\), and \(4\)](#)
 143 [635.21\(f\)](#)